



THE WELLNESS MAGAZINE
FOR OHIO VETERANS

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Veterans' Health

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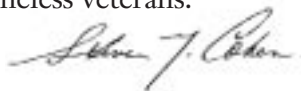
Working together for your health

As you may know, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is composed of three agencies: Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration and National Cemetery Administration. Each of these agencies provides a wide range of benefits and services to eligible veterans and their families.

VA recently began a nationwide effort to make it easier for veterans to get answers to their questions whichever one of our agencies they contact. This initiative is called "One VA." At VISN 10, we have taken the One VA approach to heart and are working within our Network to provide you benefits in a more seamless manner. But first, it is important that you get the benefits you deserve. See the next page for helpful tips on applying for VA health benefits. For more information on all available health benefits, see the special insert in the middle of this newsletter.

One major step we've taken is to organize our mental health services under the Mental Health Care Line. Read "Care Tailored To Veterans" to find out more about what we offer.

We are also reaching out to a special group of veterans who need our help—the homeless. In this issue, you'll discover how VA is working in the community to assist homeless veterans.



—Steven Cohen, M.D.,
Acting Network Director

We're making it easier for you to stay well

Community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) provide primary care services, such as a routine physical exam, screening tests, flu shots and other immunizations.

For better service, please ...

- call before coming in. We may be able to schedule an appointment that same day.
- arrive on time. This allows us to make the most of your visit.
- call to reschedule if you can't come in or are running late.



First-class
service

While preparing for surgery at the Dayton VA Hospital, I was given an angiogram and it was determined that I had major arterial blockage. I was transported by ambulance that same day to Cleveland and prepared for open-heart surgery the next morning. A team of surgeons performed a quadruple bypass on me, and I could not have asked for better care or treatment than I received there.

The doctors and nurses were all very professional and concerned caregivers. At the same time that I was getting such fine care, my wife was provided a room in the hospital so that she could be near me. Everyone there gave us first-class service. We later found out that the nurses who assisted in the angiogram in Dayton had called every day to follow my progress. You sure would not receive that kind of care and concern in most hospitals.

We recommend the veterans healthcare program to any who may need it. There may have been problems in the past, but in my opinion, the Middletown, Dayton and Cleveland facilities are all first-class operations.

Robert A. Marvin, *Franklin*

Veterans' Health is published quarterly as a patient education service by VA Healthcare System of Ohio, one of the 22 integrated networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The publication is intended to provide information to help you stay well, manage your healthcare and learn about the many health services available through the VA. This publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, which should be obtained from your doctor. All articles may be reproduced for educational purposes.

The Mission of the VA Healthcare System of Ohio is:

- To provide veterans a continuum of care that is accessible, value-added and cost-effective, and of the highest quality, within an environment of outstanding education and research.
- To promote a culture that supports and develops a caring, compassionate, competent and quality-oriented workforce.

COVER PHOTO: LARRY WILLIAMS/THE STOCK MARKET

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VA Healthcare System of Ohio

Benefits, benefits, benefits



Did you suffer an injury or disease while serving in the military? Do you have a current medical condition as a result of an injury or disease that happened while in service? If so, you may be able to receive monetary benefits from the VA. This can either be in the form of compensation or pension. Compensation is a benefit paid to veterans whose disabilities arose from military service. These disabilities are called service connected. Pension is a benefit paid to veterans whose disabilities are not related to service but who have a financial hardship and served during wartime. These disabilities are called nonservice connected.

Here's how to apply

Step 1: Call the VA Regional Office (VARO) at the national toll-free number 1-800-827-1000. You will be put in touch with the VARO nearest you. An application will be sent to you. Complete all the information and return it to the VARO.

Step 2: Once you have sent in your application, the VA will start gathering information to help support your claim. It is also important for the VA to have copies of medical records from your private physician.

Step 3: During this step you'll be scheduled

for an examination at your VA medical center. This helps determine the degree of your disability or condition. Results are sent to the VARO.

Step 4: At this point, all the medical evidence and other documents to support your medical condition are evaluated and rated by the VARO. Then they determine what disabilities they can pay for and at what percent.

Step 5: Once the rating is completed, you are promptly notified of the VARO's decision. They will provide you with the reasons for all decisions to grant or deny benefits and your right to appeal.

What you can do to help

- Be as thorough as possible when completing your application.
- Respond quickly and completely when the VARO asks for additional information.
- Keep scheduled medical appointments.
- Provide copies of medical records from your private physician (if you have one).
- Notify the VARO right away of changes in address or telephone number.
- Know your VA claim number and put it and your name on everything you send to VA.
- Notify the VARO of changes in your medical disability after you file your claim or if you wish to be evaluated for additional disabilities. **VH**

See you at the fair!

Once again, the VA Healthcare System of Ohio will be out at the Ohio State Fair providing health screenings and enrolling veterans. Stop by our booth from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. to meet VA representatives. Veterans can also receive free tests for blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar and enroll for benefits.

The Ohio State Fair runs August 3-19 at the Ohio Expo Center in Columbus. For more information on the fair, call 614-644-FAIR or toll free 1-888-OHO-EXPO.



Care tailored to



Over the past few years, VA has been changing the way it treats mental illness. Whenever possible, we are reaching out to mentally ill veterans where they live rather than treating them in the hospital. In doing so, we are building strong partnerships with local organizations, with the result being better, more convenient care.

Mental health programs

The VA's mental health services are organized under our Mental Health Care Line, which allows us to streamline our services and satisfy a variety of needs.

For chronically mentally ill veterans, for example, the VA offers Mental Health Intensive Case Management. Formerly known as Intensive Psychiatric Community Care (IPCC), the program is for those who require a great deal of support to enjoy a quality life within their com-

munities. "It helps build that bridge between inpatient care and community care," says Terry Washam, Mental Health Care Line manager at Cleveland VA campus.

Every facility in VISN 10 also has a Community Residential Care program. These group homes range from small settings to environments with more than 16 residents. About 200 homes across the state serve 400 to 600 veterans. "The program does a nice job of providing homes for people who otherwise don't have the ability to live on their own," says Dave Drew, coordinator of psychosocial rehabilitation programs at the Dayton VA campus.

Domiciliary-based care provides residential programs for the mentally ill. Each facility, or domiciliary, offers psychosocial services, post-traumatic stress disorder counseling, substance abuse treatment and homeless programs. The domiciliaries also include help for those with a dual diagnosis,

VA Healthcare System of Ohio Benefit Plan

Summer 2001

The VA Healthcare System of Ohio is one of 22 integrated service networks of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA Healthcare System of Ohio provides comprehensive inpatient and outpatient healthcare and limited nursing home and domiciliary care to eligible veterans of the United States Armed Services. Healthcare services are provided through a network of medical centers, outpatient clinics, nursing homes and domiciliaries located throughout Ohio and northern Kentucky.

What does the Millennium Bill mean to veterans?

On November 30, 1999, the President signed the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (Public Law 106-117). The act provides an array of services, including improved long-term care and other reforms of the VA healthcare system, new veterans cemeteries, speedier construction of the national World War II memorial and expansion of sexual trauma services and various other benefits.

What does this bill mean to our veteran patients? VA will provide nursing home services for eligible veterans who are in need of nursing home care and who are 70 percent or above service-connected or in need of nursing home care for a service-connected disability (some copayments may apply). Also, VA long-term care had been limited to six months on the provision of adult day care and respite care, but under the act, VA is allowed to include noninstitutional extended care in the medical benefits package, including adult day healthcare, geriatric evaluation and respite care to veterans.

Related to emergency care services, the law also authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make payments for emergency care in the community on behalf of uninsured and enrolled veterans who have received VA care within a two-year period.

Additional components of the bill include expanding the evaluation of the health status of Gulf War veterans' dependents for an additional four years, providing specific healthcare eligibility for veterans awarded the Purple Heart, extending Vietnam-era veterans' eligibility for readjustment counseling services, establishing a policy regarding chiropractic treatment, authorizing VA to increase the \$2 drug copayment amount, expanding sexual trauma programs and expanding homeless and post-traumatic stress disorder programs.

How do I enroll with the VA Healthcare System of Ohio?

If you are an honorably discharged veteran of the United States Armed Forces, you can apply for enrollment by visiting, calling or writing your nearest VA healthcare facility or benefits office. You can also apply directly for VA healthcare benefits by using www.1010ez.med.va.gov

on the Internet. Your Internet enrollment may require you to print, sign and forward the application and will be confirmed in writing. Veterans can apply for enrollment at any facility, at any time, in any year.

What are the priority groups?

Priority Group 1

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50% or more disabling

Priority Group 2

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30% or 40% disabling

Priority Group 3

- Veterans who are former POWs
- Veterans awarded the Purple Heart
- Veterans whose discharge was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty
- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 10% or 20% disabling
- Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C., Section 1151, “benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation”

Priority Group 4

- Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits
- Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled

Priority Group 5

- Nonservice-connected veterans and service-connected veterans rated 0% disabled whose annual income and net worth are below the established dollar threshold

Priority Group 6

- All other eligible veterans who are not required to agree to make copayments for their medical care, including:
 - ▶ World War I and Mexican Border War veterans
 - ▶ veterans receiving care solely for disabilities resulting from exposure to toxic substances or radiation, for disorders associated with service in the Gulf War or for any illness associated with service in combat in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after November 11, 1998
 - ▶ compensable 0% service-connected veterans

Priority Group 7

- Subpriority a: noncompensable 0% service-connected veterans whose annual income and net worth are above the established dollar threshold
- Subpriority c: all other priority group 7 veterans with income and net worth above the statutory threshold who agree to pay specified copayment

How do I get VA healthcare services?

You may obtain services by contacting your primary care provider, by calling the VA Tele-Nurse Program toll free at 1-888-VET-OHIO (838-6446) or by reporting to one of these VA healthcare facilities:

Akron VA Campus
676 South Broadway Street
Akron, OH 44311
330-344-4177

Athens VA Campus
510 West Union Street
Athens, OH 45701
740-593-7314

Bellevue VA Campus
103 Landmark Drive
Bellevue, KY 41073
859-392-3840

Brecksville VA Campus
10000 Brecksville Road
Brecksville, OH 44141
216-526-3030

Canton VA Campus
221 3rd Street SE
Canton, OH 44702
330-489-4660

Chillicothe VA Campus
17273 State Route 104
Chillicothe, OH 45601
740-773-1141

Cincinnati VA Campus
3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513-861-3100

Clermont County VA Campus
Suite 270
4355 Ferguson Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45245
859-392-3853

Columbus VA Campus
543 Taylor Avenue
Columbus, OH 43203
614-257-5200

Dayton VA Campus
4100 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45428
937-268-6511

East Liverpool VA Campus
332 West 6th Street
East Liverpool, OH 43920
330-386-4303

Ft. Thomas VA Campus
1000 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue
Ft. Thomas, KY 41075
606-572-6202

Grove City VA Campus
1953 Ohio Avenue
Grove City, OH 43123
614-257-5800

Hillsboro VA Campus
135 North High Street
Hillsboro, OH 45133
937-393-8176

Lancaster VA Campus
1550 Sheridan Drive
Colonnade Medical Building
Lancaster, OH 43130
740-653-6145

Lima Campus
1220 E. Elm St.
Lima, OH 45804
419-227-9676

Lorain VA Campus
205 West 20th Street
Lorain, OH 44052
440-244-3834

Louis Stokes VA Campus
10701 East Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-3800

Mansfield VA Campus
1456 Park Avenue West
Mansfield, OH 44906
419-529-4602

Marietta VA Campus
418 Colegate Drive
Marietta, OH 45750
740-568-0415

McCafferty VA Campus
4242 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-939-0699

Middletown VA Campus
675 North University Blvd.
Middletown, OH 45042
513-423-8387

New Philadelphia VA Campus
1260 Monroe Avenue, Ste. 15H
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
330-602-5339

Otis Moss/University
Hospital VA Campus
8819 Quincy Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-721-7221

Painesville VA Campus
W 7 Jackson Street
Painesville, OH 44077
440-357-6740

Portsmouth VA Campus
621 Broadway Street
Portsmouth, OH 45662
740-353-3236

Ravenna VA Campus
Medical Arts Blvd., Suite 11A
6693 North Chestnut Street
Ravenna, OH 44266
330-296-3641

list of facilities continues on page 4

Richmond/Hagerstown
VA Campus
Nettle Creek Health Center
State Route 1
Hagerstown, IN 47346
765-489-3950

Sandusky VA Campus
3416 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, OH 44870
419-625-7350

Springfield VA Campus
512 South Burnett Road
Springfield, OH 45505
937-328-3385

Warren VA Campus
Riverside Square
1400 Tod Avenue (NW)
Warren, OH 44485
330-392-0311

Youngstown VA Campus
2031 Belmont Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44505
330-740-9200

Zanesville VA Campus
840 Bethesda Drive
Building 3A
Zanesville, OH 43701
740-453-7725

How do I get services when I'm outside Ohio?

You may receive care from any of the more than 1,100 VA healthcare facilities in the United States.

Is there an extra charge for VA services received outside the VA Healthcare System of Ohio?

No. Fees for VA services you receive outside the network are the same as those within the VA Healthcare System of Ohio. However, keep in mind that you *may be* fully responsible for payment of services received at non-VA facilities.

How do I get services not covered in the benefits package?

You can get services not covered in the benefits package through non-VA healthcare providers *at your own expense*.

Where can I get emergency care?

Emergency services are available at these VA medical centers:

Cincinnati
3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513-861-3100

Cleveland—Wade Park
10701 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-3800

Dayton
4100 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45428
937-268-6511

When traveling outside Ohio, you may receive emergency services at any VA healthcare facility in the United States. If there is no VA medical facility in the area where you are traveling, seek emergency medical care from the closest non-VA medical facility. However, you may be fully responsible for payment of those services (*see “Emergency care in non-VA facilities” in the chart on page 6*).

What charges am I responsible for?

Most VA healthcare services are free of charge; however, some copayments apply. The copayments listed below are before any insurance payments are applied to your bill.

- \$2 for each 30-day supply of medication for nonservice-connected conditions.
 - ▶ If you have a service-connected disability rated 50 percent or more, or if your annual income is below \$9,305, you may not have to make this copayment. Veterans with

dependents have a higher income threshold to be eligible for the medication copayment exemption.

- Most nonservice-connected veterans and noncompensable zero percent service-connected veterans are required to complete an annual means test. The means test measures your income and assets. This includes income for your spouse and dependent children as well.
 - ▶ If income and assets fall below the means test threshold*, there are no copayments for medical treatment.
 - ▶ If income and assets are above the means test threshold, the following copayments** apply:
 - \$50.80 for each outpatient visit
 - \$792 for the first 90 days of acute inpatient care within a 365-day period
 - \$396 for each additional 90 days of acute inpatient care within a 365-day period
 - additional \$10 per day for acute inpatient care
 - \$792 for each 90 days of nursing home or domiciliary care
 - additional \$5 per day for nursing home or domiciliary care
 - ▶ VA will apply any insurance payments to these bills. These are the amounts owed before any insurance payments.
- VA bills and receives payments from insurance carriers to recover costs associated with providing healthcare to veterans for their nonservice-connected conditions. This includes policies held by veterans, their spouses, guardians and so on. You should provide your insurance card when you receive VA care.

* The means test threshold for 2001 is \$23,688 for a single veteran, \$28,429 for a veteran with one dependent, plus \$1,586 for each additional dependent. The means test threshold amounts change every year on January 1. In addition, if income and assets together equal \$50,000, the copayments apply.

** These figures are the 2001 copayment amounts. Copayments change every year on January 1.

Can copayments be waived?

You may file for a waiver of copayment charges by contacting the billing office at the VA facility that issued the bill. You must file a written request within 180 days of the date of the charge.

How do I change my assignment of a primary facility?

You may change your primary facility assignment by contacting your nearest VA facility or by calling toll free 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387).

How do I change my assignment of a primary care doctor?

To change your primary care doctor, consult your primary care team leader or patient representative.

How do I know my doctor is qualified?

Doctors and other healthcare providers are not hired by the VA Healthcare System of Ohio until their education and experience have been reviewed by other doctors in the same specialty area. Reviews are repeated every two years to make sure providers stay current in their medical knowledge.

What services are provided by the

SERVICE	PROVIDED	NOT PROVIDED	LIMITED AVAILABILITY	COMMENTS
Abortion		✓		
Adult day health care			✓	
Comprehensive rehabilitation care	✓			
Cosmetic surgery			✓	Reconstructive (plastic) surgery required as a result of disease or trauma is covered, but not cosmetic surgery that VA determines is not medically necessary.
Dental care			✓	Specific eligibility requirements apply. To determine if you are eligible for dental care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Diagnosis and treatment	✓			
Domiciliary care			✓	Specific eligibility requirements apply. To determine if you are eligible for domiciliary care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Emergency care in VA facilities	✓			
Emergency care in non-VA facilities			✓	Coverage provided in limited circumstances where VA's facilities cannot furnish emergency care or are geographically inaccessible. Coverage may be provided if you require emergency medical care for a service-connected disability. You or your representative should contact the nearest VA medical facility within 72 hours of receiving non-VA medical care for authorization.
Gender alteration		✓		
Home health care services			✓	May be provided when determined by VA to be necessary or appropriate for the effective and economical treatment of your disability. The provision of personal care services is more limited.
Homeless programs	✓			VA furnishes care to homeless veterans in a variety of settings ranging from outreach and referral services to residential psychosocial rehabilitation services.
Hospice care	✓			
Infertility services		✓		
Inpatient medical and surgical care	✓			If medically necessary.
Inpatient mental health care	✓			If medically necessary.
Inpatient substance abuse care	✓			If medically necessary.
Maternity services			✓	VA provides maternity benefits but has no authority to provide care for a newborn infant.

VA Healthcare System of Ohio?

SERVICE	PROVIDED	NOT PROVIDED	LIMITED AVAILABILITY	COMMENTS
Membership in health clubs and spas		✓		
Non-VA care			✓	Non-VA care may be provided in limited circumstances and must be authorized in advance. To determine if you are eligible for non-VA care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Nursing home care			✓	VA or private nursing home care may be provided for a limited time, as space and resources permit, to veterans who are acutely ill or incapacitated but not in need of hospital care. To find out if you're eligible for VA nursing home care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Orthotic appliances	✓			If medically necessary.
Outpatient medical and surgical care	✓			If medically necessary.
Outpatient mental health care	✓			If medically necessary.
Outpatient substance abuse	✓			If medically necessary.
Prevention and primary care	✓			
Private-duty nursing		✓		
Prosthetics	✓			If medically necessary.
Readjustment counseling services (Vet Centers)			✓	Veterans who served in the military in a theater of combat operations during any period of war, or in any other area during a period in which hostilities occurred in such area, are eligible for readjustment counseling at VA Readjustment Counseling Centers (Vet Centers). Eligible veterans include veterans of the Vietnam era, World War II, the Korean and Persian Gulf wars and the conflicts in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and Somalia. Family members and/or significant others are also eligible for readjustment counseling at Vet Centers to the extent needed to assist the veteran.
Reconstructive surgery			✓	May be covered if necessary as a result of disease or trauma.
Reproductive sterilization			✓	Only therapeutic sterilization may be provided.
Respite care			✓	Specific eligibility rules apply. To determine if you are eligible for respite care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Sensorineural aids (i.e. eyeglasses, hearing aids)			✓	Eyeglasses and hearing aids are provided to veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 10% or greater. Otherwise, hearing aids and eyeglasses are provided only in special circumstances and not for generally occurring hearing and vision loss.
Services not ordered or provided by licensed/accredited VA staff		✓		
Sexual trauma counseling			✓	Special eligibility rules apply. To determine your eligibility for sexual trauma counseling, contact the nearest VA medical facility.

Do people other than doctors treat patients?

Other qualified healthcare providers such as physician assistants, nurse practitioners and clinical pharmacists also treat patients. These healthcare professionals have received additional medical training and are fully licensed. These practitioners work closely with your doctors to coordinate your care.

Several facilities in the VA Healthcare System of Ohio are affiliated with medical schools. As part of that affiliation, medical students and doctors completing specialty training work in VA facilities. Treatment teams may include these individuals. Other staff physicians closely supervise these doctors in training.

Is there someone I can call with a healthcare question?

The VA Healthcare System of Ohio operates the VA Tele-Nurse program 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You may speak with a nurse at any time by calling toll free 1-888-VET-OHIO (1-888-838-6446).

How can I play a bigger role in my healthcare?

There are many ways you can participate in your healthcare:

1. Get yearly checkups, scheduled screenings and immunizations.
2. Get to know a primary care doctor who will manage your complete medical care, including referring you to specialists. This will help streamline any health-related services you may need.
3. Ask your doctor or other healthcare provider to explain all treatment options if you are diagnosed with an illness. That will help you make an informed decision.
4. Follow your doctor's orders and promptly report side effects of any medication you may be taking. (Never stop or change the amount of your medication without your doctor's okay.)
5. Make any lifestyle changes your doctor recommends such as stopping smoking, changing your diet or increasing your physical activity.
6. Prepare an advance directive that outlines the type of medical treatment you would like to receive in case injury or illness makes it impossible for you to make decisions yourself.

How do I disenroll?

You may disenroll by calling toll free 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387) or by sending a letter to:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Health Eligibility Center
1644 Tullie Circle
Atlanta, GA 30329

Due to new laws and regulations, VA healthcare benefits change occasionally. Any changes to the benefits outlined in this brochure will be presented in future issues of *Veterans' Health*.

veterans



VA's mental health services in your community

for example, patients experiencing substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder.

VA also has inpatient psychiatric services for psychiatric emergencies and detoxification. Outpatient mental health services are available at all VISN 10 facilities. Remember that all CBOCs have mental health staff.

Vocational training occurs through Veterans' Industries, which is the rehabilitation arm of the VA and the Mental Health Care Line. Veterans might learn skills like woodwork-ing or metalworking through experience in one of our workshops. Other veterans work with local businesses in a variety of areas, including clerical and food service. The mission is to help develop skills that can be used in real work situations.

"Our goal is to provide an integrated comprehensive package of mental health services to improve people's quality of life," says Drew.

Substance abuse programs

The VA's substance abuse programs fall under the Mental Health Care Line. They follow three main tenets when treating veterans: education, treatment and engagement in support services. But perhaps most important is

involving the patient in the process.

"The emphasis is on patient participation," says Richard Riddle, substance abuse treatment program coordinator at the Dayton campus. "The more we engage the patient, the better the outcome measures for success."

VA staff uses several tools to see which services would most help the veteran.

"Our goals are sobriety and recovery and developing a workable recovery program," Riddle says.

The treatment plan is assessed to see how well the patient is progressing and to evaluate the goals. An important part is to make sure patients understand what is expected of them. The patient's family plays a significant part as well; the more they are involved, the greater the patient's chance of success.

The VA also offers specialized services, including help for veterans addicted to heroin and other opiates. Opioid substitution, including methadone maintenance, helps patients end their dependency.

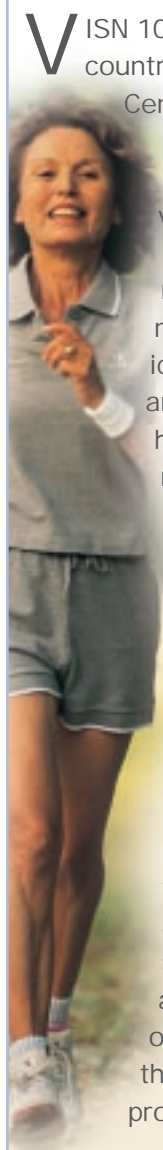
Support for substance abuse recovery does not end when the patient has completed treatment. Our After Care Program helps the vet-

eran for eight to 26 weeks with any needed support services. **VH**

VISN 10 receives awards

VISN 10 is the only network in the country to receive a Clinical Center of Excellence Award for its services for the seriously mentally ill. We provide specialized mental health services at all our major facilities and community-based outpatient clinics. Care is brought to veterans where they live. "We help them stay in the community with close support and guidance," says Terry Washam, Mental Health Care Line manager at the Cleveland VA campus.

The Cleveland VAMC also was the recipient of a Clinical Center of Excellence Award for its substance abuse treatment program, the only one in the nation to receive such an honor. The facility offers substance abuse treatment at all its community-based outpatient clinics and has the nation's only residential program for women.



Searching out thos



Help for homeless veterans

On any given night, more than 275,000 veterans nationwide are homeless. Here in Ohio, as in all other states, an estimated one-third of all homeless men have been in the armed services. These people who have given so much to their country now need help themselves. And VA is here for them.

Since VA began providing specialized assis-

tance for homeless veterans in 1987, it has developed the nation's leading network of homeless services. Through a variety of programs, VISN 10 tries to address why a veteran may be homeless so we can help him or her resume a normal life.

A complex matter

Homeless veterans often face a number of

issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, addiction and a lack of support networks. "I've never seen a homeless veteran who's just been homeless; there is always some other issue," says Brad Schaffer, division director of community psychiatry at the Cincinnati VA campus.

VA works with local organizations to reach out to homeless veterans. Referrals from community shelters, missions and coalitions help make our efforts easier.

When a homeless veteran comes in for services, we

New services for homeless women

Homeless women are a special population with special needs. To reach out to them, the VA has created the Homeless Women's Program, now available in Cincinnati and Cleveland.

Homeless women often have different issues than men. Many have been victims of sexual trauma, resulting in post-traumatic stress disorder. About 50 percent are fleeing abusive relationships, and some are also caring for children. In addition, women usually live in shelters or with relatives instead of on the street. "We find they don't cluster in the same areas that men do," says Alva Jordan, nurse practitioner and coordinator of the Homeless Women's Program in Cincinnati. "Our methods of outreach have to be different."

To reach these women, we created a referral network within the community. Once a woman enters the program, a primary counselor is assigned and an individualized treatment plan is developed.

The Homeless Women's Program is also participating in a national demonstration project that involves aggressive outreach to get women in treatment programs and a two-year case management follow-up. The project will help us evaluate treatment and improve our services.

e in need

determine what the individual needs and what should be treated first. The veteran is then directed to the appropriate program.

The main parts of our homeless program include:

- aggressive outreach to veterans living on the streets or in shelters
- clinical assessment and referral to necessary medical treatment
- long-term sheltered transitional assistance, case management and rehabilitation
- employment assistance
- housing assistance

Individualized care

All treatment is tailored to the individual. “We work with the veterans to see what contributes to the homelessness and what specific steps need to be taken to correct it,” says Steve Gilligan, chief of domiciliary and vocational rehabilitation services at the Cincinnati VA campus.

VA’s Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program (HCHV) provides extensive care for veterans with mental health or substance abuse problems. Services include outreach, physical and psychiatric health exams, treatment, referrals and case management.

VA also has a special program called Stand Downs, named after facilities that provide relief for front line troops in wartime. Stand Downs offered a relatively safe place for troops to rest and get needed assistance before returning to combat. Today’s Stand Downs for homeless veterans provide a few days of safety, food, shelter, clothing and assistance. Before they leave, we make sure to link veterans with helpful services.

Network recognized for homeless programs



VISN 10 has been honored for its services to homeless veterans. The Cleveland campus received two Clinical Centers of Excellence Awards, one for its domiciliary care and the other for healthcare for homeless veterans. This is the only facility in the nation to receive both designations. Cleveland has one of seven Comprehensive Homeless Centers in the nation, which is used as model throughout the VA.

The Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program provides treatment for homeless veterans in a residential setting. VISN 10 has four domiciliaries: Chillicothe, Cincinnati, Cleveland and Dayton. Veterans stay there for between three and six months as they work through several program stages, which include life-skills awareness classes, work therapy, job search and continued supportive services.

Work therapy is a key part of homeless services. In Compensated Work Therapy programs, VA works with local employers to help give veterans real job experience. We base assignments on the veteran’s career goals. In Cincinnati, the program has only been in place for about two years but has already seen success. Of the 333 veterans who have participated, 86 percent are now employed full time and 94 percent have rated their experience as good or excellent.

“This program can get people back into the workforce,” Gilligan says. “This is a way to show people they can do well.”

VA also works with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assist with permanent housing. The program helps veterans who have a mental illness or history of substance abuse with needed support and housing vouchers. **VH**

Support is tailored to the individual veteran’s needs.



Reaching Us Is Easy

Keep this information handy—when you need us, we'll be there.

Akron VA Campus

676 South Broadway Street
Akron, OH 44311
330-344-4177

Athens VA Campus

510 West Union Street
Athens, OH 45701
740-593-7314

Bellevue VA Campus

103 Landmark Drive
Bellevue, KY 41073
859-392-3840

Brecksville VA Campus

10000 Brecksville Road
Brecksville, OH 44141
216-526-3030

Canton VA Campus

221 3rd Street SE
Canton, OH 44702
330-489-4660

Chillicothe VA Campus

17273 State Route 104
Chillicothe, OH 45601
740-773-1141

Cincinnati VA Campus

3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513-861-3100

Clermont County VA Campus

Suite 270
4355 Ferguson Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45245
859-392-3853

Columbus VA Campus

543 Taylor Avenue
Columbus, OH 43203
614-257-5200

Dayton VA Campus

4100 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45428
937-268-6511

East Liverpool VA Campus

332 West 6th Street
East Liverpool, OH 43920
330-386-4303

Ft. Thomas VA Campus

1000 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue
Ft. Thomas, KY 41075
606-572-6202

Grove City VA Campus

1953 Ohio Avenue
Grove City, OH 43123
614-257-5800

Hillsboro VA Campus

135 North High Street
Hillsboro, OH 45133
937-393-8176

Lancaster VA Campus

1550 Sheridan Drive
Colonnade Medical Building
Lancaster, OH 43130
740-653-6145

Lima Campus

1220 E. Elm St.
Lima, OH 45804
419-227-9676

Lorain VA Campus

205 West 20th Street
Lorain, OH 44052
440-244-3834

Louis Stokes VA Campus

10701 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-3800

Mansfield VA Campus

1456 Park Avenue West
Mansfield, OH 44906
419-529-4602

Marietta VA Campus

418 Colegate Drive
Marietta, OH 45750
740-568-0415

McCafferty VA Campus

4242 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-939-0699

Middletown VA Campus

675 North University Blvd.
Middletown, OH 45042
513-423-8387

New Philadelphia VA Campus

1260 Monroe Avenue
Suite 15H
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
330-602-5339

Otis Moss/University Hospital VA Campus

8819 Quincy Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-721-7221

Painesville VA Campus

W 7 Jackson Street
Painesville, OH 44077
440-357-6740

Portsmouth VA Campus

621 Broadway Street
Portsmouth, OH 45662
740-353-3236

Ravenna VA Campus

Medical Arts Boulevard
Suite 11A
6693 North Chestnut Street
Ravenna, OH 44266
330-296-3641

Richmond/Hagerstown VA Campus

Nettle Creek Health Center
State Route 1
Hagerstown, IN 47346
765-489-3950

Sandusky VA Campus

3416 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, OH 44870
419-625-7350

Springfield VA Campus

512 South Burnett Road
Springfield, OH 45505
937-328-3385

Warren VA Campus

Riverside Square
1400 Tod Avenue (NW)
Warren, OH 44485
330-392-0311

Youngstown VA Campus

2031 Belmont Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44505
330-740-9200

Zanesville VA Campus

840 Bethesda Drive
Building 3A
Zanesville, OH 43701
740-453-7725

Call Tele-Nurse at 1-888-838-6446. • Visit us online at: www.va.gov/visn10/

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